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Spice & Wolf

Vol. 12

PARENTAL ADVISORY
WARNING
EXPLICIT CONTENT

SPICE & WOLF

SPICE & WOLF

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SPICE & WOLF

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, MISS ELSA.

MR. LAWRENCE!

IT HAS BEEN SOME TIME...

...SINCE WE'VE SEEN YOU, MR. LAWRENCE, MISS HOLO.

YOU SEEM IN FINE HEALTH TOO, EVAN.

I AM!

WHAT? YOU TWO KNOW EACH OTHER?

...HE ONCE CAME TO MY VILLAGE'S AID.

OH HOH!

SO YOU'RE FROM TEREO AS WELL, THEN, SIR?

NO, I JUST HAPPENED TO BE PASSING THROUGH AND WAS ABLE TO BE OF SOME SMALL ASSISTANCE.

KUFF!

フォン

AHEM!

AH, I SEE. MY GOOD-NESS.

ぽん

PAN

PAN (PAT)

MY, MY!

PASHI (SLAP)

THIS IS A GENERAL STORE, NOT A TAVERN. MIGHT I ASK YOU TO CELEBRATE YOUR REUNION ELSEWHERE?

AH, APOLOGIES!

AH!

YOU OUGHT TO SECURE LODGINGS BEFORE VENTURING OUT AGAIN, HMM?

AND YOUR COMPANION APPEARS TO BE QUITE TIRED.

MIGHT YOU ARRANGE A ROOM FOR US!?

YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT, QUITE RIGHT INDEED! WE CAME HERE WITHOUT EVEN CHANGING OUT OF OUR TRAVEL CLOTHES.

ZUI (SLIDE)

WH— COME NOW, MR. PHILON. DON'T BE SO HEARTLESS!

GASHI (GRAB)

WE DON'T NEED A FANCY ROOM, YOU KNOW. I'VE ASKED AT INNS ALL OVER THE CITY.

YOU'VE BAD TIMING.

.....

I DON'T MIND BEING PUT ALONGSIDE MY GOODS SOMEWHERE, BUT MY COMPANION—

GASHI (GRAB)

I CAN'T LET SUCH A FATE BEFALL HER, YOU SEE.

STILL...

MY STOREHOUSES AND ROOMS ARE ALL PACKED FULL WITH GOODS. THE APPRENTICES ARE HAVING TO WEDGE THEMSELVES INTO THE GAPS TO SLEEP.

AND IF THEY DON'T WORK, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT THEY'LL USE THEIR PENT-UP ENERGY FOR.

GOODNESS.

WHA—?

I CAN'T ALLOW HARM TO COME TO ONE OF GOD'S LAMBS IN THE NIGHT.

SORRY TO INTRUDE, BUT...

GOKU (GULP)

ゴ!?

...IF YOU DON'T MIND THE ROOM WHERE WE'RE STAYING...

OHH?

WHA —?

ER...

むう

MUU (IRK)

OH, WHAT A WONDERFUL PERSON! GOD'S BLESSINGS WILL SURELY BE UPON YOUR HEAD...!

OHH!

GABA (GRAB)

ガバッ

DON'T THEY SAY GOOD DEEDS DONE HERE ON EARTH WILL STORE UP WEALTH IN HEAVEN?

WE HAVE NO MEANS TO REPAY YOU.

WE SHALL IMPOSE UPON YOU, THEN.

THERE MAY WELL BE OTHERS WHO COME STAGGERING DRUNKENLY IN, BUT—

OF COURSE I DO NOT MIND!

I SUPPOSE I OUGHT TO HELP AS WELL.

IF IT'S JUST YOU, SIR, YOU MAY STAY HERE.

WONDERFUL!

THIS CERTAINLY IS A BURDEN OFF MY CHEST! SPLENDID, SPLENDID!

RIGHT!

I'LL ARRANGE THE MEALS.

HAVE THE INNKEEPER PREPARE A BED FOR THEM, PLEASE.

TAKE CARE.

WE'LL GO ON AHEAD.

WE'RE AT EUNICE'S INN ON THE NUNNERY STREET, IF ANYTHING HAPPENS...

BUN (SHAKE)

BUN

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

OH, I'M BEING RUDE TO MY SAVIOR—

I AM CALLED LE ROI, A BOOKSELLER.

I AM KRAFT LAWRENCE, TRAVELING MERCHANT.

!

THE ONES WITH ME ARE HOLO THE NUN AND COL THE ASPIRING CHURCH LAW STUDENT.

THAT MUST MAKE FOR A RARE AND PLEASANT JOURNEY!

LE ROI!?

I'D LOVE TO ASK HIM ABOUT THE FORBIDDEN TEXT RIGHT HERE...BUT IT'S NOT THE TIME.

HA HA HA!

MR. LE ROI, YOU SEEM TO GET ALONG VERY WELL WITH MR. PHILON.

Y-YES! VERY MUCH SO! SINCE I'M TRYING TO SELL BIBLES TO MERCENARIES!

DIDN'T GO SO WELL TODAY...

SO MR. PHILON IS AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE!

DON (THUMP)

MR. LE ROI, THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU...

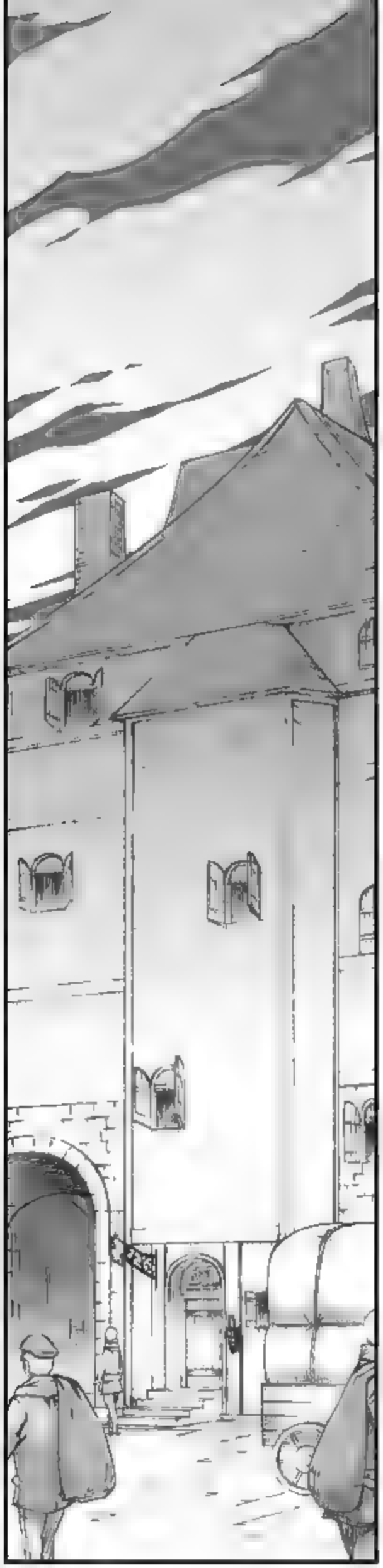
OH HOH...!

...I HAD COME TO MR. PHILON'S WITH A QUESTION, BUT I WASN'T SURE HOW TO RAISE THE ISSUE.

IT'S A NOURISHING DRINK PREPARED WITH GINGER AND BOILED-DOWN GOAT MILK WITH HONEY ADDED IN.
THANKS UNTO THE LORD.

PHEW...

KOKU (GULP)



I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE.

YES. TO BE HONEST, I JUST CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT.

THE REASON I LEFT THE VILLAGE?

I'M SEARCHING FOR A MAN OF THE CLOTH TO TAKE OVER DUTIES AT MY CHURCH.

...THANKS TO YOU, THE FLAME OF FAITH HAS BEEN REKINDLED IN TEREO.

MOREOVER, YOUR INCREDIBLE POWER DESTROYED ENBERCH'S SCHEMES.

BUT...

YOU TWO ARE INCREDIBLE.

HMPH!

NOW EVEN PEOPLE FROM ENBERCH COME ALL THE WAY TO OUR VILLAGE TO BUY SWEETS.

OF COURSE, THE BISHOP OF ENBERCH'S LIPS ARE SEALED, BUT THAT WILL NOT LAST FOREVER.

THE PEOPLE OF ENBERCH DO NOT KNOW THE DETAILS OF OUR VILLAGE. THEY WOULD SURELY BE SURPRISED TO LEARN I ALONE TEND THE CHURCH.

SO I'VE COME IN SEARCH OF SOMEONE WHO CAN TAKE ON THIS HOLY DUTY IN OUR VILLAGE.

AHEM! ...EXCUSE ME

KOFF! KOFF!

FOR SUCH A TASK, I CAN HARDLY SEND MERE LETTERS OUT HITHER AND YON.

OF COURSE. MY FATHER, FATHER FRANZ, LEFT THE CHURCH IN MY CARE. I MUST FIND AN INDIVIDUAL WORTHY OF THAT TRUST.

YOU NEED TO FIND SOMEONE WHO'LL MEASURE UP TO YOU, THEN?

HUH. THAT'S A RATHER GOOD IDEA.

?

I WANT TO MEET HIM AND GET A RECOMMENDATION FOR WHO MIGHT TAKE THE POSITION IN HIS PLACE.

...I WAS TURNED DOWN BY SOMEONE IN THE LETTER OF RECOM-MENDATION TO MY FATHER.

SKIPPING SOME MINOR DETAILS...

TEE-HEE!

EVEN IF NOT, IT'S POSSIBLE HE CAN INTRODUCE YOU TO SOMEONE TRUSTWORTHY.

MAYBE HE'LL CHANGE HIS MIND AFTER MEETING YOU IN PERSON, MISS ELSA.

IT'S SAYING, IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DO IT YOURSELF, COUGH UP SOMEONE BETTER.

CHIRA (GLANCE)

THAT'S THE PRIMARY REASON FOR MY TRAVELS, BUT...

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A DIFFICULT DECISION TO MAKE.

AHEM AHEM

I'VE BECOME AWARE OF HOW TRULY IGNORANT OF THE WORLD I AM.

I WAS HOPING THIS JOURNEY WOULD GIVE ME A CHANCE TO SEE MORE OF IT.

THAT BOOK-SELLER, YOU MEAN?

OF COURSE, I THOUGHT TO GIVE UP ON IT MANY TIMES, BUT I'VE HAD GOD'S GUIDANCE ALL THE WAY.

I CAN SEE WHY YOU WOULD THINK SO.

TEE-HEE!

YOU SEEM TO ENCOUNTER THE STRANGEST PEO—

—ER.

THAT'S RIGHT.

NO MATTER HOW SILLY OR GREEDY HE MIGHT APPEAR TO BE.

IF FATHER TRUSTED HIM, THEN I OUGHT TO TRUST HIM TOO.

I HAD ONLY MET HIM ONCE BEFORE, BUT I KNEW HE WAS A LONGTIME ACQUAINTANCE OF MY FATHER'S.

AND IN FATHER'S LETTERS, IT WAS WRITTEN THAT THIS WAS A MAN I COULD TRUST IN TIMES OF HARDSHIP.

I ONLY SPOKE TO HIM A LITTLE EARLIER, BUT HE SEEMS A RATHER SINCERE MAN.

YES. YOU MIGHT SAY HIS AVARICE IS WHERE HIS SINCERITY COMES FROM.

SO WHAT YOU MEAN IS THAT HE'S AFTER FATHER FRANZ'S LIBRARY, THEN?

NIKO CGRIND

I REALIZED THERE'S NO GREAT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING FAITHFUL TO YOUR OWN AVARICE AND BEING FAITHFUL TO THE TEACHINGS OF GOD.

HE'S TRIED EVERYTHING HE CAN THINK OF TO GET ME TO TELL HIM WHERE FATHER FRANZ'S LIBRARY IS...

...BUT ALWAYS AMICABLY.

PUI (FWIP)

COULDN'T BE HELPED, THEN, COULD IT?

AH.

THE JOURNEY WAS DIFFICULT... I FEEL I REALIZE FOR THE FIRST TIME HOW WEAK HUMANS ARE.

SO THAT IS HIS AIM, AND WHEN I TOLD HIM I WANTED TO TRAVEL, HE READILY AGREED.

HOWEVER, I HAVE FINALLY RESOLVED A QUESTION THAT'S PLAGUED ME EVER SINCE YOU LEFT.

KOKU (NOD)

KOKU

HMPH!

A QUESTION?

...I'VE BECOME PAINFULLY AWARE OF JUST HOW POWERLESS I AM.

BORROWING THE POWER OF MY COMPANION WILL NOT MAKE THAT WEAKNESS DISAPPEAR.

YES.

THE QUESTION OF WHY, WHEN YOU HAVE SUCH POWER, YOU WOULD CHOOSE EVEN NOW TO TRAVEL WITH A SIMPLE HORSE-DRAWN WAGON.

チラ CHIRA (GLANCE)

SO I TRY TO RELY ON MY OWN ABILITIES. OR...

KAH KAH KAH!

HEE HEE!

WHENEVER I'VE EMBARRASSED MYSELF, IT'S BECAUSE I BROKE THIS RULE.

...OR ASK FOR HER HELP IN ADDITION TO MY STRENGTHS.

THEY SAY THE WORLD IS VAST, AND IT'S TRUE.

PHEW

EVERY MERCHANT KNOWS NOT TO PUT SOME-THING BIG IN A SMALL BOWL.

I GIVE THANKS TO GOD...

...THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MEET AGAIN.

I SEE THERE ARE SOME ISSUES WITH COL'S TABLE MANNERS.

!

むっしゃ
MUSHA (MUNCH)

MUSHA
むっしゃ

INCIDENTALLY...

EH!

WELL, IT CAN'T BE HELPED, I SUPPOSE.

THIS CANNOT BE SUFFICIENT THANKS, BUT...

...I MAY BE ABLE TO HELP HIM LEARN THE PROPER WAY TO EAT.

THAT GOES FOR YOU TOO.

HUH!?

HEH!

WAH...

IT'S ALL RIGHT. THERE WAS ONE IN MY VILLAGE WITH A VERY BAD MEMORY, BUT EVEN HE LEARNED.

GAH-HA-HA

ACHOO!

ZZZ

ZZZ...

ZZZ

WELL, SHE IS TIRED FROM HER LONG JOURNEY.

THOSE SELF-IMPORTANT ETIQUETTE LECTURES TIRED HER OUT AS MUCH AS THEY DID COL.

STILL...

...THE PORTLY FELLOW TODAY WAS LE ROI THE BOOKSELLER? 'TIS TOO PERFECT.

I WAS ABLE TO TALK TO MR. PHILON ABOUT THE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE NORTH.

THANKS TO THAT, I'VE BEEN BUSY.

PAK!

PAK! (CRACKLE)

DOLAN PLAINS
MT. ROEF
NYOHHIRA
ROEF RIVER
ROAM RIVER
LENOS
BUT HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE IN THE HUGE FORESTS IN THE REGION AROUND MT. ROEF.
IT SEEMED MR. PHILON, WORKING AS AN INTER-MEDIARY FOR MERCENARIES, HADN'T HEARD OF YOITSU.
I'LL ASK MORE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ONCE THE MAP ARRIVES.
RUMOR HAD IT, THE DEBAU COMPANY MIGHT START A WAR TO SEIZE NORTHERN MINING RIGHTS FOR ITSELF...
SEPARATELY, HE'D HEARD MERCENARIES WERE GATHERING IN THE NORTHERN TOWN OF LESKO.

NO...

...I SHALL LEAVE THAT TO YOU.

I SEE.

GATA (RATTLE)

I'M GOING TO MEET LE ROI. COMING?

AYE...

KA (STEP)

KO

HOT WINE AND SNACKS, PLEASE.

SURE THING!

NOT AT ALL!

SORRY TO MAKE YOU WAIT.

OH-H-H!

MR. LAWRENCE! WELCOME, WELCOME!

AH, MR. LAWRENCE! YOUR PARTY'S WAITING FOR YOU UPSTAIRS.

SPICE & WOLF

WELL, WELL!

HA! HA! HA!

HELENA! BRING SOME ALE!

WAI

WAI (CHATTER)

WAI

WAI

WAI

COMING!

I COULDN'T FACE THE FATHER THEN.

HA! HA! HA! HA!

BECAUSE YOU SELL EVEN BIBLES?

MR. LE ROI, DO YOU SELL ANTIQUE BOOKS AS WELL?

CATALOGING ANCIENT BOOKS... KNOWING WHO HAS WHAT AND WHERE...

...THAT IS MY GREATEST BUSINESS ASSET!

DON (THUMP)

OF COURSE! ANTIQUE BOOKS ARE ACTUALLY MY SPECIALTY!

WELL, DON'T SAY THIS WHERE OTHERS CAN HEAR..

SO DOES THAT INCLUDE... FORBIDDEN BOOKS, I WONDER?

ARE YOU INTER-ESTED?

...BUT I'M WORKING ON A BIG DEAL FOR JUST SUCH A RARE TOME.

...IN WHICH IS DESCRIBED A SUPERIOR TECHNOLOGY FOR EXCAVATING MINES.

I WAS IN KERUBE UNTIL JUST YESTERDAY... I HEARD OF A CERTAIN MANUAL...

YOU DIDN'T LOOK LIKE THE KIND OF MERCHANT TO CHASE SUCH TALES, MR. LAWRENCE.

PACHI

110 F

PACHI (SNAP)

110 F

...BUT DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE PUT OUT A REWARD.

I'VE HEARD OF THE RUMORS OF A BOOK THAT WAS A HOT TOPIC IN KERUBE FOR A TIME.

THE DEBAU COMPANY, WHICH RUNS THE MINING TOWNS OF THE NORTH, SPREAD ITS NET AROUND KERUBE...

PAKU

110 F

PAKU (MUNCH)

110 F

I HAVE A PERSONAL STAKE IN THIS.

I HAVE... STRONG FEELINGS TOWARD THE NORTH.

ARE YOU FROM THE NORTH YOURSELF?

SOME PEOPLE DON'T WANT UNLIMITED MINING DEVELOPMENT.

IF NOTHING ELSE, I WANT TO KEEP IT OUT OF THE DEBAU COMPANY'S HANDS.

IF...

...YOU WERE TO SELL THAT BOOK, MR. LE ROI...

...WHAT WOULD THE TERMS BE, DO YOU SUPPOSE?

...AHH!

I SEE, THEN.

I'M NOT, BUT MY TWO TRAVELING COMPANIONS ARE.

...I EXPECT THE MARKET FOR IT TO BE QUITE ROBUST.

YES, WELL...

I'M SURE THIS WILL SELL FOR AT LEAST THAT MUCH.

...THE BOOK *GOD AND THE HEART OF IRON* WRITTEN BY THE ALCHEMIST ALAN MIKHAIL SOLD FOR A HUNDRED GOLD LUMIONES.

FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD...

WHAT ABOUT... CONDITIONS WHEN DECIDING ON A BUYER?

A... HUNDRED, YOU SAY?

GOKU (GULP)

ゴク…

NORMALLY I'D SELL IF I'D EARN EVEN ONE *EN/* IN PROFIT... BUT I CAN'T LEARN THE TRUE MARKET VALUE OF A BOOK LIKE THIS.

CERTAINLY... SINCE BEING CONSPICUOUS WOULD BE BAD.

BOOK TRADES TAKE MANY FORMS... SUCH AS BRINGING A BUYER...

...AND A SELLER TOGETHER FOR A FACE-TO-FACE DEAL.

BUT EVEN A BIT UNDER THAT IS STILL QUITE A SUM.

I TAKE IT BOOKS ARE VERY HARD TO PROCURE.

SO THE FACT BOOKSELLERS WANT THIS ONE SO BADLY IS PROOF ITS VALUE IS SO HIGH.

BUT I'VE HEARD THE BOOK WAS LOST IN A FIRE... PERHAPS YOU NEED NOT BE CONCERNED.

HA! HA! HA! HA!

YES, YOU ARE CORRECT INDEED!

IF SELLERS WERE ALL SHELTERED INDIVIDUALS OR BANKRUPT RULERS, I'D HAVE AN EASY TIME.

MR. LE ROI...

...YOU KNOW WHERE THE TEXT IS, DON'T YOU?

YES...

...HER NAME IS MARIEL.

"A CERTAIN SOMEONE"?

...I ASKED A CERTAIN SOMEONE ABOUT IT.

WHY WOULD YOU THINK I KNOW THAT?

HA! HA! HA! HA!

OH MY.

OH HOH...

SHE SHOULD BE TRAVELING CAREFREE USING A SOUTHERN CITY AS A BASE RIGHT ABOUT NOW.

OH YES.

IS SHE... IS MARIEL BOLAN WELL?

THAT'S A NAME I'VE NOT HEARD IN A LONG TIME.

WHEN THE BOLAN FAMILY WENT BANKRUPT, I HELPED THEM PUT THEIR ASSETS IN ORDER.

I'VE HAD MANY DEALINGS SINCE.

...THAT IS GOOD.

YES, YES! INDEED IT IS!

I TOO AM AT A CROSSROAD.

.....

...PERHAPS BOOKSELLING IS A JOB AT THE CROSSROADS OF MANY LIVES.

MR. LE ROI, LET ME ASK YOU DIRECTLY.

COULD YOU AT LEAST SELL ME INFORMATION ON THE BOOK?

I SEE... I SEE.

MMM...

UNDER-STOOD. I'LL REVEAL A BIT OF INFO AND CONDITIONS.

BEYOND THAT, YOU MUST PRODUCE SOMETHING OF EQUIVALENT VALUE.

I'VE NARROWED IT DOWN TO A COMPANY IN THE NORTHERN PART OF LENOS HERE.

WHY HERE OF ALL PLACES?

OF COURSE, I DO NOT KNOW THE EXACT LOCATION.

THERE WAS AN OLD ABBEY THERE...

...A LORD BEGAN CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW ABBEY. THUS, AMONG THE RUBBLE OF THE OLD ABBEY WAS DISCOVERED THE ENTRANCE...

IT HAD BEEN STRUCK BY LIGHTNING AND BURNED TO THE GROUND DECADES AGO, BUT HEARING ITS REPUTATION FOR PIETY...

...TO A CELLAR NOT EVEN THE ABBOT HIMSELF HAD KNOWN ABOUT. AND FROM IT WAS RECOVERED A MOUNTAIN OF BOOKS.

BUT EVEN THEN, A FEW REMAINED MYSTERIES, MOST OF WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN LANGUAGES OF FAR-OFF DESERT KINGDOMS OR SIMPLY TOO OLD.

MOST OF THEM WERE WRITTEN IN ANCIENT LANGUAGES. SCHOLARS WERE CALLED IN FROM FAR AND WIDE AND ASKED FOR THEIR APPRAISAL.

WHILE THE REPRESENTATIVE COULD NOT READ THEM, HE STILL COPIED THE TITLES DOWN AS BEST HE COULD TO CREATE AN INDEX.

DECIPHERING THEM REQUIRED EXTREME EFFORT, AND IF IT TURNED OUT THE BOOKS CONTAINED SOMETHING TERRIBLE, THE ABBEY'S REPUTATION WOULD PLUMMET...

WHETHER MOVED BY SUCH TALK OR NOT, THE LORD SOLD THE VOLUMES TO BOOK COLLECTORS TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION.

IT WAS I WHO THEY CALLED, FOR I AM VERY WELL VERSED IN THE WRITINGS OF THE DESERT.

SOME YEARS LATER, A CERTAIN COMPANY TOOK SOME OF HIS TREASURES AS COLLATERAL FOR A LOAN.

AS THE COMPANY SORTED THROUGH EACH ONE, IT CAME ACROSS THE INDEX IN QUESTION.

BUT THEY DID NOT KNOW ITS VALUE, SO THEY ASKED A BOOKSELLER.

SEEING THE TITLES OF BOOKS I KNEW TO BE FORBIDDEN, I BOUGHT THE INDEX ON THE SPOT AND CAST MY NET FAR AND WIDE.

SCHOLARS HAD TO INVESTIGATE EVERY SINGLE LINE AND WORD, BUT I ONLY NEEDED THE TITLE AND A BRIEF SUMMARY.

...NO ONE COULD READ, CALLED CALAMITOUS MERELY FOR BEING WRITTEN, LET ALONE SURVIVING...

AND THEN ONE OF THE VOLUMES WAS CAUGHT. A BOOK OF FORBIDDEN TECHNIQUES THAT...

SO YOU CAN'T APPROACH UNTIL YOU'RE COMPLETELY PREPARED TO BUY IT...

TO BE BLUNT, I CAN ONLY PRAY THE COMPANY IT ENDED UP AT DOES NOT REALIZE ITS VALUE.

IF I CONTACTED THEM TOO EAGERLY THEY'D KNOW SOMETHING WAS UP.

JIJI (FLICKER)

I'M CONFIDENT I CAN NEGOTIATE THE PURCHASE IF I HAVE ALL THE FUNDS IN ORDER.

IS WHO YOU'RE SELLING IT TO A SECRET AS WELL?

HE IS LORD NICHOLAS OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF RAONDILLE.

TO HIM... IF IT'S NOT FORBIDDEN, IT ISN'T WORTH HIS WHILE.

NO...

IN EXCHANGE FOR GIVING FORBIDDEN INFORMATION TO A MAN TRUSTED BY THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE OF BOLAN...

.....

GOKU (GULP)

ゴク

I INTEND TO SELL IT FOR A HUNDRED AND TWENTY GOLD LUMIONES.

NOW THEN, IT'S BUSINESS FROM HERE ON.

...I WANT YOU TO LEND ME CAPITAL.

YES, CAPITAL TO PURCHASE THE FORBIDDEN BOOK...

CAPITAL... YOU SAY?

...EIGHTY GOLD PIECES.

YOU DON'T NEED TO PROVIDE IT PERSONALLY.

I'M BETTING YOU CAN GET IT FROM MARIEL BOLAN.

...I SEE.

IF I GET INVOLVED, I'LL HAVE TO GO WITH LE ROI FOR HIS BOOK DEAL.

...I SEE...

IF IT COMES TO THAT, IT'LL TAKE A LOT OF TIME TO FIX...

HE MIGHT JUST TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN.

EVEN HOLO WOULD THINK THAT'S UNREASONABLE.

...NOT ELIMINATE EVERYTHING THAT MIGHT POSSIBLY THREATEN HER HOMELAND.

MY PROMISE TO HOLO WAS TO BRING HER TO YOITSU...

DON (SLAM)

I HAVE AN IDEA FOR THE FUNDS. CAN YOU GIVE ME A FEW DAYS?

OF COURSE. SO LONG AS LORD NICHOLAS IS SOLVENT, IT'S A SAFE ASSERTION.

GUI (GLUG)

SHE MUST, BUT...

...IF I WAS TO FINANCE THIS...

...CAN YOU SAY WITH CERTAINTY IT WILL NOT END UP IN THE DEBAU COMPANY'S HANDS?

ドドド
DO

ドカカ
DOKAKA

ドカカ
DOKAKA (CLOP)

UNDER-STOOD.

AFTER THAT, WAIT FOR A REPLY BY POST-HORSE AND FORM A CONTRACT.

I'LL SEE ABOUT GETTING MY COMPANION TO CONCUR, POSSIBLY TONIGHT.

I AWAIT FORTUITOUS NEWS.

GJ (SQUEEZE)

THE LETTER BY POST-HORSE WAS ADDRESSED TO LUD KIEMAN, HEAD OF THE KERUBE BRANCH OF THE ROWEN TRADE GUILD.

THE LETTER DETAILED HAMMERING OUT A DEAL FOR THE "FORBIDDEN BOOK" THAT STIRRED KERUBE UP ONCE.

NORMALLY, SUCH A LETTER WOULD BE SKIMMED AND THEN THROWN IN THE FIREPLACE...

...BUT CONSIDERING THE NARWHAL INCIDENT, A LOAN WOULD BE FAIRLY PLAUSIBLE.

THEY'LL PROBABLY ADD SOME STRICT CONDITIONS THOUGH...

UH...

UH
~
...

THEY'RE NOT HERE...

WHERE'D THEY ALL GO?

THE CHURCH?

OH.

'TIS BECAUSE HER NOSE TURNED UP AT THE SCENT OF THE ALCOHOL IN THE ROOM.

SO THEY TRIED TO BRING ME ALONG TO MORNING PRAYERS AND SUCH.

AYE.

KASHA (SPLASH)

KASHA

...WHEN HE SAW THE GIRL, HE LET US IN.

WE WERE IN DANGER OF BEING LEFT OUT, BUT...

AYE.

DID IT WORK?

YOU LOOK AS THOUGH YOU'VE HAD YOUR FAVORITE TOY TAKEN FROM YOU.

MALI (IRIK)

COL'S STUDYING TO BE A CHURCH LAW STUDENT TO MOVE UP IN THE WORLD, AFTER ALL...

...HE CAN PROBABLY LEARN A GREAT DEAL FROM ELSA.

JORI

JORI (SHAVE)

PLIN

PLIN (FLUME)

I SHALL NOT SPEAK ILL OF THAT BLOCKHEAD RECRUITING FOR HER ABBEY, BUT 'TIS LIKE SHE'S TAKING HIM WITH HER...!

HMPH!

I'M A WISEWOLF, YOU FOOL.

GU (GRAB)

IF IT'S LIKE THIS WITH COL, I DARE NOT IMAGINE IF I WERE TAKEN TOO.

BREAK FAST TIME

AYE

BA (LEAP)

...ACCOMPANYING LE ROI IS AT LEAST POSSIBLE.

BUT DOING SO WILL TAKE ME TO THE LIMIT OF MY TIME. I HAVE SOME ROOM FOR WHAT I CAN DO DURING THE WINTER, BUT ONCE SPRING ARRIVES, I MUST RETURN TO MY ORIGINAL TRADE ROUTE.

...YOU WOULD HAVE TO GO TO YOITSU ON YOUR OWN.

IN OTHER WORDS...

ZAWA (RUSTLE)

WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO TAKE THE FRUITFUL PATH.

YOU MEAN...

GATA- (RATTLE)

YOUR PROMISE TO ME WAS THAT YOU WOULD TAKE ME TO YOITSU.

SO LONG AS YOU PROVIDE ME TRUE DIRECTIONS THERE, I CONSIDER THAT FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE.

WHETHER OR NOT YOU COME WITH ME IS A MATTER OF SENTIMENT ONLY.

GU (GULP)

YOU KNOW THAT...

GISHI (CREAK)

CHIRA (GLANCE)

BUT THERE WAS ANOTHER, WASN'T THERE?

ANOTHER?

THE NORTH

YOU SAID YOU'D FOLLOW ME TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH TO GET IT FROM ME, YOU DID.

WHER-EVER YOU GO

I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE A GOD. YOU STILL OWE ME!

...I HAVE A DEBT TO YOU, DO YOU REMEMBER? YOU WERE TERRIBLE ABOUT IT.

NO, THERE WERE CIRCUM-STANCES...

UGH...

DID YOU TRULY...?

ARGH...

SUCH AN AVARICIOUS MERCHANT YOU ARE.

.....

HAAH...

OH, GOD, PLEASE FORGIVE ME MY POWER-LESSNESS.

NI (GRIND)

ALLILI (IRIKO)

MM. STILL, IF THE PROFIT FROM THIS PAYS OFF THAT DEBT...

WELL, WITH ENOUGH GOOD FOOD AND WINE, I THINK I CAN ENJOY MYSELF FOR THAT LONG.

SO THEN... AT LEAST TEN DAYS BY WAGON, YOU SAID?

...THEN SURELY EVEN THE STUBBORNEST MAN OR GOD WOULD FORGIVE IT, EH?

A JOURNEY WITHOUT WINE AND SOFT BREAD IS A PATHETIC SIGHT INDEED.

COME, NOW THAT IT'S DECIDED, GO MAKE PREPARA-TIONS.

YOU'RE RIGHT. MIGHT AS WELL GO OUT WITH A FLOUR-ISH, EH?

.....

ZUI (SLIDE)

EH?

LEAVE PLENTY OF DRIED MEAT.

GOT IT, GOT IT.

HA HA HA!

GOODNESS.

MUST YOU ALWAYS BE SO GLOOMY?

GAYA

GAYA (CHATTER)

I SEE YOU'RE CARRYING CHEESE. HOW MUCH IS IT?

...NO PRICE?

HUH?

I'LL NEED SOME CHEESE.

GASHA (CLUNK)

I ARRIVED JUST YESTERDAY, BUT I HAVE ANOTHER LONG TRIP AHEAD.

AH... MUST'VE COME IN DURING THE PAST DAY.

GOOO (ROAR)

I SEE. UNLUCKY FOR YOU.

AH?

JUUU (SSSS)

...BUT BECAUSE IT'S ALREADY SOLD.

IT LACKS A PRICE NOT OUT OF LAZINESS...

NICE THAT BUSINESS IS BOOMING, BUT IT'S MAKING MY HEAD SPIN.

...AND EACH ONE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE TODAY.

...AND THAT ONE...

AND THAT ONE...

BUT NO CHEESE... THERE'LL BE SOME DISAP-POINTED PEOPLE.

NICE PROBLEM TO HAVE.

I HAVE TO KEEP SEEING THE SHOCKED FACES OF UNLUCKY TRAVELING MERCHANTS, SEE.

!

OUR CHEESE GOES VERY WELL WITH LIQUOR, SO THE TAVERNS HAVE PLENTY STOCKED UP.

HAAH...

THERE'S ALWAYS A SHORTCUT, HUH...?

YESSIR!

ON THE SHELF INSIDE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. I'LL GIVE IT A TRY.

GOOD MORNING, MISS HELENA.

KARI

KARI (SCRITCH)

ONE, TWO...

GOODNESS, YOU'RE EARLY TODAY.

QUITE. HASTE CAN BE A VIRTUE, AFTER ALL.

CHIRA (GLANCE)

NOTHING LIKE THAT. I WAS HOPING YOU'D LET ME BUY A LITTLE FROM YOU.

HAAH...

SO, WHAT PROFIT IS IT YOU'RE CHASING THIS TIME, EH?

HEY, YOU! YOU TRYING TO MAKE ME DO INVENTORY BY MYSELF !?

AHEM!

WHY NOT GO TO THE MARKETPLACE? I'M A LITTLE BUSY HERE.

HUH?

IF TAVERNS START SELLING GOODS, THE TOWN WOULD BE IN CHAOS.

PITA (PAUSE)

...IF YOU'RE PLANNING TO USE ALL OF THIS IN YOUR COOKING.

CLEARLY SO...

...I'LL PAY IN CASH. GOLD COIN, IF YOU LIKE.

OR...

I'M SURE THEY ARE...

THESE ARE EXTRA SUPPLIES, IN CASE OF HARDSHIP.

GU (GULP)

I SEE, I SEE HOW IT IS!

AS SOON AS YOU FIGURED THINGS OUT, YOU CAME STRAIGHT HERE.

...WOULD SMALLER COINS BE BETTER?

SO...

...THE VALUE OF COIN IS RISING?

BUT THESE TRULY ARE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES.

I'M SURE THEY ARE...

KOKU (NOD)

ONLY VERY RECENTLY, LENOS HAD BEEN IN CHAOS. PRICES FOR FURS HAD FALLEN, PUTTING LENOS, DEPENDENT ON THE FUR TRADE, IN JEOPARDY.

THE CITY DECIDED THAT, IN EXCHANGE FOR SELLING TO FOREIGN TRADERS, THEY WOULD ACCEPT ONLY CASH.

BUT AN OUTRIGHT BAN WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR THE CITY...WORST CASE, THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN VIOLENT REBELLION BY FOREIGN TRADERS.

FURS WERE MUCH MORE PROFITABLE TO SELL AFTER BEING PROCESSED AND TURNED INTO CLOTHING, SO THE CRAFTSMEN HAD NO DESIRE TO SELL TO OUTSIDE TRADERS.

THERE WAS NO OUTRIGHT BAN ON SALES. THEY THOUGHT THIS SOLVED EVERYTHING, BUT THE CHURCH'S OTHER CONDITION WAS PROBLEMATIC.

SO, USING THE CHURCH, THEY REQUIRED THAT ALL BUSINESS BE CONDUCTED IN CASH, SINCE NO ONE CARRIED LARGE AMOUNTS OF COIN LONG DISTANCE.

AND THUS DID THEY LOAN A LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY TO THE FOREIGN MERCHANTS.

THE CHURCH'S COFFERS WERE ALWAYS FULL OF MONEY. THEY SOUGHT SOMEONE THROUGH WHOM THEY COULD LEND TO THE OUTSIDE.

AND SUCH DISUTES ALWAYS LEAVE THEIR CLAW MARKS BEHIND.

THE FURS WERE BOUGHT UP BY THE FOREIGN MERCHANTS, AND THE ENRAGED CRAFTSMEN RIOTED.

SINCE THE RIOT, IT'S LIKE THE MONEY'S DRIED UP FROM THE TOWN.

GACHA (RATTLE)

KACHA

THERE'S NO MONEY ANYWHERE YOU GO. IT VANISHED LIKE SMOKE.

EVEN IF YOU ALLOW THAT MANY TRADES HAPPEN ON CREDIT, YOU STILL NEED SMALL COINS. WE'RE IN REAL TROUBLE.

THEY SAY ANYTHING SCARCE BECOMES DEAR.

THERE'S TOO MUCH CASH IN THE HANDS OF THE FUR DEALERS.

BUT BECAUSE COIN SHORTAGE IS A PROBLEM FOR ANY TOWN, IT'S NOT AS THOUGH WE CAN IMPORT SOME COPPERS.

I SEE.

AND NOW, EVEN A DULL COPPER IS STARTING TO LOOK AS BRILLIANT AS GOLD.

AND SO PEOPLE SPECULATE BY BUYING UP GOODS WHILE THE PRICE IS HIGH.

KARI (SCRITCH)

KARI

VERY CLEVER. VERY CLEVER.

AND AS A TAVERN, YOU CAN EASILY AVOID ANY ACCUSATIONS THAT YOU'RE HOARDING.

TRY THE MARKET-PLACE, THEN.

TOO HIGH.

KARI

KARI

HEH HEH!

HEH. THAT'S A COMPROMISE I CAN MAKE.

BUT I'LL BE EXPECTING QUALITY.

UNDER-STOOD.

THAT YOU'D COME ALONE.

OH?

GACHA (RATTLE)

STILL, I'M A BIT SURPRISED.

I SUPPOSE THAT'S TRUE.

HMMM...

I'VE COME ALONE MORE TIMES THAN NOT.

AH HA HA HA HA!

MY COMPANION TOLD ME NOT TO THINK THAT A JEWEL CAN SHINE ALONE THOUGH.

AND BEST IF YOU COULD TAKE DELIVERY IN THE MORNING, BUT NOT TOO EARLY WE'RE A TAVERN, AFTER ALL.

SO, WILL THE NEXT FEW DAYS BE ALL RIGHT?

AHH... SO FUNNY.

YES, IF YOU PLEASE.

UNDERSTOOD. NOT TOO LATE, NOT TOO EARLY.

TIMING IS OF THE ESSENCE

MORNINGS ARE PROBABLY LIKE THIS, HUH...?

?

IF YOU PLEASE.

IF IT'S URGENT, I'LL HAVE IT SENT TO YOUR INN ONCE IT ARRIVES.

NO, NOT YET, I HEAR.

OH RIGHT... HAS THE LETTER COME YET?

WAH HA HA HA!

AFTER, I SAW MR. LE ROI AT PHILON'S GENERAL STORE AND TOLD HIM OF HOLO'S CONSENT...

...I POLITELY DECLINED MR. LE ROI'S PROPOSAL FOR A BANQUET TO CELEBRATE BUT WAS DELAYED GETTING BACK.

!

NO SURPRISE THE NIGHT IS COLD...

HOLO!

DON'T TELL ME... YOU WERE THERE THE WHOLE TIME?

MM.

THEY ARRIVED A BIT AFTER YOU WENT OUT. BUT...

...THIS IS WHAT YOU SEARCHED FOR ON MY BEHALF.

I THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE FITTING TO LOOK AT IT WITH YOU.

SPICE & WOLF

...IT ARRIVED...

THE MAP OF YOITSU...

SU (SHF)

SO THAT'S WHY SHE CAME IN SPITE OF THE COLD...

IT WOULD BE FITTING TO HAVE A LOOK AT IT TOGETHER.

KOKU (NOD)

HEH!

FUWA (HUG)

YOU'RE QUITE THE FOOL.

'TIS I...

WHO SHOULD OPEN IT?

HERE. HOT WINE.

GLAD THERE WAS A STALL OPEN THIS LATE.

WA (CHATTER)

GAYA (CHATTER)

GAYA

zuzu (SIP)
ズズ

FIRSTLY.

...IS WHAT I WOULD WANT TO SAY, BUT...

UGH...

...YOU HOPED THE DUMPLING HEAD WOULD CHANGE HIS MIND SO YOU COULD GO TO YOITSU WITH ME, DID YOU NOT?

NO, THAT IS NOT EVEN THE PROBLEM.

AND IF YOU'D LOST YOUR CHANCE FOR PROFIT AND BROUGHT DISASTER TO YOITSU, WHAT THEN?

HMPH!

KAPA (RATTLE)

THERE ARE GOOD SENTIMENTS AND BAD SENTIMENTS.

...CAN'T YOU AT LEAST CALL ME SENTIMENTAL?

GOWA (STIFFEN)

YOU'RE EVEN MORE OF A MAIDEN THAN I!

WHAT BOTHERS ME CAN BE EXPRESSED THUS—

POCHA (SPLASH)

EVEN IF YOU CANNOT GO WITH ME...

...CAN WE NOT AT LEAST READ THIS TOGETHER?

COME NOW.

SHE'S MAKING EVEN ME NERVOUS ...

KASA (RUSTLE)

HM?

KASA

ALL RIGHT.

OH HOH...

THE MAP DRAWN BY FORMER MERCENARY CHAPLAIN, CURRENT SILVERSMITH FRAN VONELY WAS A MAGNIFICENT THING.

AS WAS CUSTOMARY ON MAPS, THE FOUR CORNERS HAD BEEN DECORATED WITH DRAWINGS OF GODS OR SPIRITS.

PERHAPS FRAN WAS DRAWING ON LEGENDS AND STORIES SHE HERSELF HAD COLLECTED.

THERE, IN THE TOLKIEN REGION, THE HOWLING WOLF SEEMED TO BE ANNOUNCING THE NAME WRITTEN JUST UNDER ITS PAWS—

HOLO'S EYES WERE DRAWN IN BY THE IMAGE OF A WOLF IN THE DEEP FORESTS OF MT. ROEF.

"YOITSU"...

...THERE IT IS.

OH, 'TIS A REAL PLACE, AFTER ALL.

I NEVER ACTUALLY THOUGHT THAT WE'D FIND IT.

GASHI

GASHI (RUB)

KUHI KUHI

ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE.

THANK YOU.

COME, YOU.

IF A GOD ONCE WORSHIPPED BY HUMANS SAYS IT, IT'S CERTAINLY CAPTURED A SORT OF TRUTH.

IF IT'S GIVEN YOU THAT SORT OF OPTIMISM, THEN OUR WORK HAS SUCCEEDED.

AND AFTER ALL THAT, THIS IS MY REWARD?

I'VE BEEN BEATEN, STABBED...

?

...AND NEARLY BANKRUPTED.

GYU (GRAB)

ARE YOU DISSATISFIED, THEN?

AYE.

'TIS WELL, THEN.

CERTAINLY NOT.

WHY DID I CHOOSE LE ROI?

KO (STEP)

KO

?

KO

YOU WISH TO COME TO YOITSU WITH ME SO MUCH, DO YOU?

I DO.

GYU (SQUEEZE)

HEE HEE!

ACK!

HEH. WE'VE TERRIBLE TIMING, YOU AND I.

.....?

KO

KO (STEP)

IF THE DEAL GOES WELL, I PROFIT, YOITSU IS PROTECTED, AND HOLO PROFITS, AS MY REWARD.

KO

KO

I'VE GIVEN IT MUCH THOUGHT, AND I BELIEVE YOU MUST GO AFTER THE BOOK.

BUT IS GOING TO YOITSU TOGETHER NOT PROFIT FOR BOTH OF US?

.....

COME NOW. HOW MANY OF US ARE TRAVELING?

I SAID IT, DID I NOT? WE MUST TAKE THE FRUITFUL PATH.

KO

KO

AND WHAT DOES THE LAD STAND TO GAIN FROM GOING TO YOITSU?

...THREE OF US.

W-WELL... BUT...

THERE IS NO DEEP REASON FOR HIM TO BE TRAVELING WITH US.

HE JUST NEEDED TO REST HIS INJURED WINGS. THAT'S ALL.

COL CAME UPON US IN THE COURSE OF HIS OWN TRAVELS. HE EVEN SET ASIDE HIS OWN GOALS FOR THAT.

HFF...

HE'S A STRONG-HEARTED PUP, BUT A PUP IS STILL A PUP.

RATHER THAN JOINT PROFIT FOR TWO, SEPARATE PROFIT FOR ALL THREE.

AND THEN ALONG CAME THAT HARD-HEADED GIRL.

WHAT WAS TUGGING AT ME, THEN? DID I NOT TRUST HER ENOUGH...?

AS MUCH AS HER HARD-HEADEDNESS MAKES ME ILL, SHE'S PERFECT FOR COL.

SHE OUGHT TO TAKE THE LAD WITH HER. WE'LL SURELY SEE THEM AGAIN.

AT THE VERY LEAST, THERE'S PROFIT IN IT, AND THAT DUMPLING HEAD WILL GO SOUTH, AYE?

IT WAS ALL TOO FITTING A REASON TO DEAL WITH LE ROI AND END THEIR SHARED JOURNEY.

...YOU WANT TO HEAR ABOUT TOLKIEN?

AH, IT'S A NICE PLACE. BIT LARGE THOUGH.

LE ROI AND EVAN WERE PROBABLY RUNNING AROUND THE MARKET PREPARING FOR TRAVEL.

WELL, IF THEY'RE CLOSE, HOLO WILL CATCH THEIR SCENT.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

THERE WAS A LITTLE VILLAGE THERE, OR RATHER A GROUP OF SHELTERS FOR WOODSMEN AND HUNTERS TO STAY IN.

COME TO THINK OF IT.

ZUI (SLIDE)

AND THE NAME?

IT DIDN'T HAVE A NAME. NOT A PLACE YOU'D GIVE A NAME TO.

DID SOME-ONE TELL YOU THEY WERE BORN IN TOLKIEN?

KOKU (NOD)

WHOEVER IT WAS OUGHT TO BE PROUD THEY WERE BORN IN SUCH GRAND WILDERNESS, I'D SAY.

...MUCH MORE THAN DEEP MOUNTAINS AND FORESTS.

FOR PEOPLE FROM AROUND HERE, THE NAME TOLKIEN DOESN'T MEAN...

...MOUNTAINS THERE YET BOUNTIFUL?

ARE THE FORESTS AND...

WOLVES?

...AND WOLVES?

PHEW!

ABSURDLY SO. THE WORD IS THAT THE DEER ARE HUGE.

YEAH...

...THE AREA'S THICK WITH FIERCE WOLVES.

LOTS OF MERCS CLAIM TO BE DESCENDED FROM TOLKIEN WOLVES

WELL... ONE OF US IS.

OR ARE SEVERAL STAYING HERE, OR IN TOLKIEN, EVEN?

YOU'RE HEADING WITH MR. LE ROI TO ANOTHER CITY?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

YOU'LL STILL HAVE TO PAY TOLLS THOUGH.

I'LL WRITE YOU AN INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR A MERCENARY BAND YOU'LL LIKELY MEET.

IF I KNOW THE TOWN'S NAME, I'LL KNOW WHAT ROUTE YOU NEED.

MEET UP WITH COL AND THE OTHERS FOR BREAKFAST?

SINCE WE WENT OUT AS SOON AS WE WOKE UP.

...THERE'S GOING TO BE A BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF THE TOLKIEN REGION.

...IN ALL LIKELI-HOOD...

EH...?

.....

...AND HE LEARNED OF IT.

I WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE YOUNG WOMAN SO CHECKED WITH A SLAVE TRADER ACQUAINTANCE JUST TO SEE...

A VETERAN MERCENARY BAND HAS MADE ADVANCE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE SLAVE TRADERS.

OTHERWISE, THEY MIGHT BE TURNED AWAY IF THEY SHOWED UP ONE DAY LOADED WITH PRISONERS.

BUT I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE GOAL IS.

IT'S JUST THICK FORESTS AND ENDLESS MOUNTAIN STEPPE. THERE ARE BARELY ANY VILLAGES WORTH NAMING.

OR MAYBE THEY'RE THINKING THAT'S THE PERFECT PLACE TO SOURCE SLAVES.

OR ELSE...

THEY STRUCK A LODE OF ORE?

UGH!

M-MIGHT THIS HAVE SOME EFFECT ON OUR DEAL?

ORO (FIDGET)

ORO

OF COURSE, I MIGHT BE OVERTHINKING THINGS.

ALL THE SLAVE TRADER SAID WAS THAT THEY'D RECEIVED WORD FROM A MERCENARY TROOP THAT THEY MIGHT BE BRINGING PRISONERS DOWN FROM TOLKIEN.

THE MYURI MERCENARY BAND.

HOLO HAD FRIENDS IN HER HOMELAND. YUE...INTI...

A WOLF?

COME TO THINK OF IT, I THINK THE MERCENARY TROOP IN QUESTION HAS A WOLF ON ITS STANDARD.

IT'S NOT A BIG TROOP, BUT IT'S BEEN AROUND FOR A LONG TIME. WHAT WAS IT...?

IT HAD A RATHER STRANGE NAME.

TON (TAP)

TON

OH!

SO ONE'S ALIVE...

WONDER IF PARO AND MYURI ARE OKAY...

MUNYA (SCRUNCH)

HOLO WOULD SOMETIMES CALL THEIR NAMES WHEN DRUNK.

THEY'RE A SMALL BAND, BUT I'VE HEARD THEY'RE WELL DISCIPLINED. THEIR LEADER'S ESPECIALLY CLEVER, IT'S SAID.

I'VE NEVER SUPPLIED THEM THOUGH, SO I ONLY KNOW THE NAME.

SPICE & WOLF

SEEMS IN FINE SPIRITS.

HE'S DONE SPLENDIDLY. AND EATEN ENOUGH FOR THAT, TO BE SURE.

THERE, THERE. BEEN A WHILE, PARTNER.

BURURU (NEIGH)

MUSHA (CHOMP)

MUSHA

I SEE. SO YOU GET PLENTY OF PRACTICE NEGOTIATING WHILE OUT ON THE ROAD, EH?

QUITE, AND I'M ALWAYS HAVING TO BARGAIN WITH HIM OVER HOW MUCH I HAVE TO FEED HIM TO GET HIM TO WALK A FEW MORE STEPS.

AND THERE'S NO NEED TO LET HIM EAT SO MUCH.

HA HA HA!

AH, SO YOU'LL HAVE A BETTER PLACE TO BARGAIN FROM ON YOUR LAST DAY?

RIGHT.

THANK YOU. I EXPECT TO LEAVE IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, SO PLEASE DON'T RENT HIM TO OTHERS.

I'LL LEAVE HIM TO YOU FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

TALKING ABOUT THE STATE OF THE WORLD WITH HIM, WERE YOU?

TA (PATTER)

TA

TA

TA

BUT IF 'TIS JUST A BIT LONGER, I CAN WIPE OUT A LITTLE MORE OF MY DEBT TO YOU.

GOOD-NESS...

WE'VE BOTH BEEN PUT UP AS COLLATERAL BEFORE, SO WE WERE COMMISERATING.

AYE.

IF IT ALL GOES WELL.

THIS MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME. GO ON AHEAD TO PHILON'S.

LE ROI AND COL MUST BE DONE PREPARING THE FOOD.

...AYE.

YOU'VE ALL GOTTEN QUITE USED TO YOUR EXCURSIONS. PHILON'S GENERAL STORE, I IMAGINE?

YES. IT'LL BE SOMETHING LIKE A DINNER PARTY.

ALSO, I WAS TOLD TO GIVE YOU THIS.

!

IT WAS THE REPLY TO THE MESSAGE I SENT TO KIEMAN BY POST-HORSE.

THE NOTE READ, "WE LARGELY CONCUR WITH LENDING THE CAPITAL.

"HOWEVER, ONLY ON CONDITION LAWRENCE ACCOMPANIES LE ROI UNTIL THE PURCHASE AND SALE ARE COMPLETE."

MM

PRETTY MUCH JUST AS I EXPECTED ...

AND FURTHER, THE LENDER WILL VISIT LENOS TO SPEAK TO LE ROI.

GATA (RATTLE)

THE ENVOY WILL LIKELY ARRIVE IN NO TIME.

THERE'S NO GOING BACK NOW.

HE'S SENDING A CLOSE ASSOCIATE? THAT'S NATURAL.

PROB-ABLY NOT HIM.

IN ADDITION, MR. LE ROI ISN'T BACK. MUST BE DELAYED AT THE MARKET.

WELL, HIS STOMACH SHOULD BRING HIM BACK HERE SOON ENOUGH.

YOU'RE LATE MR. LAWRENCE

BASA (RUSTLE)

AH, MR. LAWRENCE.

HAS MY COMPANION BEEN HERE?

YES, SHE WAS, BUT SHE LEFT FOR THE HARBOR WITH YOUR LITTLE COMPANION.

GOOD DAY!

SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.

ELSA! WELCOME BACK!

AS FOR THE DEACON-ESS—

PEKO (BOW)

IT'S ALL RIGHT, NOT EVERY-ONE'S BACK YET

WHEW.

BATAN (OPEN)

WHETHER I SHOULD TELL HOLO ABOUT MYURI IS A HARD QUESTION. MAYBE I SHOULD POSE IT TO GOD?

COME, WE'VE BROUGHT GIFTS!

BASHA (SPLASH)

GOTO (CLANK)

PACHA

PACHA (SPLASH)

HFF!

HFF!

HFF!

OHH.

LOOK, WE'VE FOUND TODAY'S LUNCH!

BACHA (SPLATTER)

BACHA

OH HOH...

WOW...

HMPH!

MAGNIFICENT, AREN'T THEY? SOME FOOL HAD TIPPED OVER A GREAT BARREL OF THEM AT THE DOCKS.

YURA (WAVER)

YURA

'TIS OUR REWARD FOR HELPING CATCH THEM. I WAS THE BEST AT CATCHING THEM.

YES.

WAS I NOT?

YORO

YORO (WOBBLE).

COME, COL.

OH, AYE. I AM A BIT DAMP. WELL, I'LL LEAVE THE PREPARATION TO YOU.

KUN (SNIFF)

KUN

THEY ARE QUITE PUNGENT.

WELL... YOU STILL OUGHT TO CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES.

BISHO (DRIP)

BISHO

HA HA HA HA HA HA!

BIKU (TWITCH)

IF YOU WALK AROUND OUTSIDE LIKE THAT YOU'LL CATCH COLD. I'LL HAVE THE LADS HEAT A BATH.

BISHO

BISHO

AS FAR AS A CHANGE OF CLOTHES...

PA (SHINE)

R-REALLY?

HA HA HA

GOODNESS, BUT YOU'RE AMUSING GUESTS INDEED! DON'T WORRY, WE'LL MAKE READY SOME HOT WATER AND HANDLE THE PREPARATION.

HA!

I CAN GET A CHANGE OF CLOTHES FROM THE INN.

IN THE MEANTIME, WE'LL DEAL WITH THESE EELS. THEY'LL MAKE FOR AN UNEXPECTEDLY GRAND LUNCH!

HM? OH WELL, LET'S DO THAT, THEN.

YESSIR.

BATH FOR BOTH OF THEM

SO MANY BOXES

WELL THEN, I'M OFF TO THE INN.

I FEEL FOOLISH FOR WORRYING ABOUT SO MANY THINGS.

PHEW!

PACHA (SPLASH)

I'M COMING TOO!

I HAVE SOME SPARE CLOTHES I CAN LEND YOU.

EEK!

1/10

PACHA

I'LL HELP GET THE FOOD READY.

.....

I HAVE BEEN THINKING...

...CAN I BE OF ANY USE TO YOU?

HUH?

TO ALL OF YOU...

...I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO GO WITH LE ROI.

AM I WRONG?

GUESS IT'S EASY FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO SEE.

HA HA...

DID YOU THINK YOU WERE HIDING IT?

YOU'RE RIGHT.

SO, EVEN IF I CANNOT DIRECTLY SOLVE YOUR PROBLEM, I AM STILL CLERGY.

IF SOMEONE IS HIDING PAIN IN HIS HEART, I CAN AT LEAST LISTEN TO HIS TROUBLES.

AHEM.

コホン

WHY SHOULD TWO LOVERS NOT HOLD HANDS?

TO BE FRANK, THE WAY YOU TWO ACT IS UNNATURAL.

I'M A HUMAN, AND SHE'S A WOLF. THERE'S NOTHING "NATURAL" ABOUT US.

THAT IS NOT WHAT I MEAN.

THEN WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

KAAAA (BLUSH)

...ER?

AH...

TA (STEP)

TA

TA

N-NOW YOU SEE, MISS ELSA, THAT WE LIVE HERE IN REALITY.

SOLVING OUR PROBLEM IS NOT AS SIMPLE AS JOINING HANDS.

HAAH

...PARDON ME.

IF THAT'S SO, WHY WON'T YOU FIGHT FOR IT?

YOU SAY THAT WITHOUT HAVING EVEN TRIED! YOU—

ACK!

...!

GASHI (GRAB)

...MY APOLOGIES.

I HAVE TRIED... TO FIGHT.

GISHI (CREAK)

TRULY?

TRULY OR NOT...THAT I DON'T KNOW.

BASA (FWUMP)

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU "DON'T KNOW"?

OF COURSE I WANT TO GO TO HER HOMELAND WITH HER.

I MEAN EXACTLY THAT.

IT'S BEST FOR HER, AND IT'S BEST FOR ME.

I WANT TO GO WITH HER, BUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES WON'T ALLOW THAT.

PREVENTING THAT MEANS GOING TO A DISTANT TOWN WITH LE ROI FOR A BOOK DEAL.

BUT THE FOREST SHE CALLS HOME IS THREATENED WITH RUIN.

AND IT'S BEST FOR COL.

AND THE LOGICAL COURSE OF ACTION IS TO DO AS SHE SAYS.

I'M A TRAVELING MERCHANT. SUCH A DETOUR WOULD KEEP ME FROM REPLENISHING GOODS AT SMALL VILLAGES FOR MY PROPER TRADE ROUTE.

TO GO TO HER HOMELAND AFTER MIGHT TAKE TWO WEEKS...OR A MONTH.

YOU AND SHE CAME TO OUR VILLAGE AND CREATED A MIRACLE, WHICH SAVED US ALL.

CAN THERE NOT BE A MIRACLE?

GU SQUEEZE

CAN YOU NOT...

GU (CLENCH)

IT'S THAT WE—OR AT LEAST I AM NOT A PURE ENOUGH SOUL TO BE SAVED BY A MIRACLE.

YOU HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING WRONG OR MISTAKEN.

I KNOW IT'S SELFISH OF ME TO SAY SO, BUT...

GISHI (CREAK)

...NO.

IF A MIRACLE CANNOT SAVE YOU AS WELL...

...HOW CAN I GO ON TEACHING THE WORD OF GOD?

...THE MYURI MERCENARIES ARE CLOSE TO HER HOMELAND.

IT TURNS OUT...

MYURI, YOU SEE, IS THE NAME OF SOMEONE MY COMPANION SEPARATED FROM, CENTURIES AGO IN HER HOMELAND, WHOM SHE THOUGHT DEAD.

SHE DOESN'T KNOW YET. I TOLD PHILON NOT TO TELL HER.

HE'S PROBABLY ALIVE THOUGH.

GACHA (RATTLE)

...WE'VE GOTTEN THIS FAR, I MAY AS WELL CONFESS IT.

A MERCENARY BAND WOULD NEVER NAME THEMSELVES AFTER A WOMAN, AFTER ALL. IT'S RIDICULOUS, BUT I'M JEALOUS.

I WANT HER TO CONCENTRATE ON THE JOURNEY WITH ME UNTIL THEN.

WHY?

I WISHED THAT MYURI WOULD HAVE STAYED DEAD.

HORRIBLE, AREN'T I?

THAT IS INDEED AWFUL OF YOU. NO DOUBT GOD WILL PUNISH YOU.

GACHA! CRATTLE

AND YET I STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

FEELING THE WAY YOU DO, YET TRYING TO ACT RATIONALLY...

NOT EVEN AS A TEACHER OF GOD'S WORD.

POTA (DRIP)

POTA

THIS IS OUR PROBLEM AND OUR DECISION. IT'S NOT YOUR PLACE TO SAY WHAT WE SHOULD DO.

...I SIMPLY DON'T UNDERSTAND. IT'S UNNATURAL. CHOOSE ONE OR THE OTHER.

YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT.

BUT I WANTED TO REPAY MY DEBT TO BOTH OF YOU.

IT DOESN'T SEEM TO ME THAT EITHER OF YOU ARE ACTING IN YOUR OWN BEST INTERESTS...

...SO I WANTED TO AT LEAST...

K
G...ARE

...ME, NO.

BUT SHE IS, I ASSURE YOU.

THEN MY QUESTION STILL STANDS. WHY WON'T YOU TURN AND FIGHT BACK?

YOUR INDECISION IS SO INFURIATING I CAN HARDLY STAND IT!

IT'S LIKE THERE ARE TWO EVANS.

HFF!

HFF!

GOD IS THE FRIEND OF THE RIGHTEOUS. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR!

WHY WON'T YOU JUST ACT THE WAY YOU HONESTLY FEEL?

WHY ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT SWALLOWING DOWN YOUR OWN OPINION IS BEST FOR HER?

YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT EVERY-THING.

BUT I'M A SIMPLE MERCHANT.

HAAH

ハフ！

YOU MERCHANTS USE ALL SORTS OF UNBELIEVABLE TECHNIQUES, DON'T YOU?

YOU HAVE MEANS AVAILABLE TO YOU THAT CAN ONLY BE CALLED MAGIC, DON'T YOU?

IF YOU SAY YOU'VE TURNED AWAY FROM GOD AND DESERVE NO MIRACLES...

SO THINK!

OR IF...

...IF YOU'RE HESITATING TO USE SUCH METHODS, THEN BE AT EASE.

...THEN STOP PRAYING AND THINK LIKE A MERCHANT!

I WILL DO ALL I CAN TO ASSURE THEIR CORRECTNESS IN THE FACE OF GOD'S TEACHINGS.

IF A HUNDRED MERCHANTS HEARD THE STORY, THEY, PLUS TWENTY FRIENDS, WOULD ALL AGREE THAT HOLO'S WAY WAS THE RIGHT ONE.

THEY'D PROBABLY HAND ELSA A GLASS OF WINE AND TELL HER TO CALM DOWN.

EVEN MONEY ORDERS, MYSTERIOUS DOCUMENTS LETTING YOU MOVE MONEY WITHOUT CARRYING HEAVY COIN ON YOUR BACK, WERE NO MYSTERY ONCE EXPLAINED.

TO BEGIN WITH, MERCHANTS DID NOT POSSESS ANY SUCH MAGICAL ABILITIES.

DEALS WITH MONEY ORDERS

MAKE DEAL WITH NUMBERS IN AN ACCOUNT INSTEAD OF COIN

SELL COMMODITIES TO COVER DIFFERENCE IN CASH OR CARRY TO NEXT DEAL

THEY WERE SIMPLY A WAY OF MOVING GOODS DOWN THE INVISIBLE CANAL CALLED CREDIT.

HM?

EVEN IF ONE USED CREDIT BACKWARD, ALL THEY COULD STEAL WAS MONEY, NOT LIFE.

MONEY WAS NOT BEING MAGICALLY TRANSPORTED. THERE WAS A PRINCIPLE TO IT.

USE CREDIT BACKWARD?

INCIDENTALLY...

...IF I REALLY DID THINK OF A WAY TO MAKE A MIRACLE HAPPEN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO FOR ME?

MISS ELSA.

BIKU (STARTLE)

...I-I'D GIVE YOU MY BLESSING.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO PUT ME TO THIS.

IF YOU PLAY AROUND, YOU'LL CATCH COLD.

AYE, THERE YOU ARE! THE WATER OF NYOHHIRA IS A HUNDRED TIMES HOTTER THAN THIS!

BASHA (SPLASH)

HOT!

BAFU (PLOP)

!

HERE. TOWEL.

...WI...

ACHOO!

WASHI (WIPE)

WASHI

I...

I'VE PUT EACH OF YOU A CHANGE OF CLOTHES AT THE DOOR.

COL, YOURS ARE FROM ELSA, SO MAKE SURE TO THANK HER.

UWAH!

BA (SHAKE)

BA

BA

BA

BA

BA

YOU TOO.

TA (PAD)

TA

TA

TA

TA

HONESTLY. I SUPPOSE NO ONE SAW YOU?

JUST WHAT SORT OF A FOOL DO YOU TAKE ME F—

ACHOO!

IS LUNCH PREPARED YET?

THEY'RE MAKING THE OVEN NOW. JUST A BIT LONGER.

THIS SORT OF BATHING ISN'T BAD...

...BUT IN NYOHHIRA, YOU CAN HAVE STRONG, SNOW-CHILLED WINE BROUGHT TO YOU.

AS THE MEN AT THE DOCKS SAID, "THEY'RE BEST COVERED IN OLIVE OIL AND JUST ROASTED."

AYE.

JUUUU (SIZZLE)

HOW ABOUT THAT, EH?

AND SINCE EVERYONE IN THE AREA DOES LIKEWISE, THEY ALL KEEP THE PRICES GOOD AND HIGH.

KUI (TUG)

KURU (SPIN)

THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH FOR THE HAIR.

POFU (FLUFF)

COME, MY BODY'S NEXT.

HURRY AND DRY YOURSELF OFF AND GET DRESSED.

THERE'S A MERCENARY BAND... NEAR YOITSU.

?

ZUI (SLIDE)

AND WHAT SHALL I DO ONCE I'M CHANGED?

MUU (POUT)

THEY CALL THEMSELVES... THE MYURI MERCENARIES.

...WHA —!?

GA-
(GRAB)

FIND MR. LE ROI FOR ME. I NEED TO SEE HIM.

WHAT'S YOUR AIM, THEN!?

I HAVE A PROPOSAL FOR HIM.

GIRI
(GRIND)

I'M NOT GOING TO BREAK ANY PROMISES.

DO YOU...

BUT I'M GOING TO PROPOSE A CHANGE IN PLANS, SO FAR AS CIRCUMSTANCES ALLOW.

I'M A MERCHANT.

GAKU (SHAKE)

GAKU

...MEAN TO SAY THAT YOU'RE NOT GOING WITH DUMPLING HEAD...!?

I WOULD NEVER BREAK A CONTRACT SO EASILY.

AH!

THAT DEPENDS.

...DON'T TELL ME THAT...

... YOU'RE ...

YES.

JEAL-OUS.

BUT, COME...

TO BE FRANK, I HATE THAT IDEA.

BUT WHILE YOU'RE REUNITED WITH HIM, I'LL BE ALONE ON MY WAGON WITH MY THOUGHTS.

...MYURI IS NOT WHAT YOU'RE THINKING...

WHAT... WILL YOU DO?

I OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO SAVE COL AND MISS ELSA THE TROUBLE OF GOING TO YOITSU AS WELL.

MAKE IT SO I DON'T HAVE TO GO WITH LE ROI.

BA (FLAP)

CAN YOU DO SUCH A THING?

...IS THE ONLY WAY I CAN TURN AND FIGHT— AS A MERCHANT.

I HOPE SO. THIS...

BLUWA (WHOOSH)

WASHI

WASHI (RUB)

DON'T YOU THINK I'VE MATURED SOME?

WASHI

YOU FOOL...

GOSHI (RUB)

GOSHI

GOSHI

THAT'S ALL RIGHT WITH ME.

TRULY, SUCH A FOOL!

LE ROI WAS GUARDED AT FIRST, BUT HE ACCEPTED THE CHANGE "PROVIDED YOU CAN FINANCE IT, MR. LAWRENCE."

うあー
AHH...

AND TWO DAYS LATER, AN ENVOY ARRIVED FROM THE ROWEN TRADE GUILD'S KERUBE BRANCH.

PISHI (FREEZE)

PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

Y-YES...

TO THINK HE'D COME IN PERSON...

I SEE YOU ARE WELL, MR. LAWRENCE.

PLEASED TO MEET YOU, LE ROI.

I AM CALLED LUD KIEMAN.

OH, I HAD OTHER BUSINESS IN LENOS ANYWAY.

BESIDES ...

PECHIN (SLAP)

THANK YOU FOR COMING SUCH A LONG WAY.

THAT'S SPLENDID.

...EVER SINCE ***THE RECENT INCIDENT***, I THOUGHT I'D STRETCH MY LEGS BEYOND KERUBE.

...MR. LAWRENCE WOULD LIKE TO ALTER OUR CONTRACT...

MR. KIEMAN, AS I THINK YOU ARE ALREADY AWARE...

SOMETHING URGENT HAS COME UP. I WILL BE UNABLE TO PERSONALLY ACCOMPANY MR. LE ROI.

AHEM!

フホン

APOLO-GIES...

...BUT I HAVE NO INTENTION OF WALKING AWAY FROM A DEAL ALREADY IN MOTION.

MY COMPANION SAID MUCH THE SAME.

...ARE YOU SOBER?

...WHAT OF IT?

SO, NO DOUBT IT CONSTANTLY DOES SUBSTANTIAL BUSINESS WITH A NUMBER OF OTHER COMPANIES.

THE COMPANY THAT POSSESSES THE BOOK MR. LE ROI SEEKS IS COMPARATIVELY LARGE.

GISHI (CREAK)

SURELY YOU DON'T MEAN MONEY ORDERS? THEY'RE JUST A CONVENIENT WAY OF MOVING MONEY.

IF SO, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP MR. LE ROI PURCHASE THE BOOK EVEN FROM AFAR.

NOT IF WE USE THEM TO HARASS.

WE'LL ISSUE MULTIPLE MONEY ORDERS TO THE COMPANY FROM MANY OTHERS.

—HOHH?

WE'LL CHANGE ALL THE NAMES AND SEND ALL THE MONEY ORDERS IN AT ONCE.

THE COMPANY WILL START CASHING THEM WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT THE STRANGE COINCIDENCE AT FIRST.

EACH FOR MAYBE A FEW DOZEN SILVERS. OR PERHAPS A HUNDRED OR TWO HUNDRED.

AND IN THE MIDST OF ALL THIS, CUSTOMERS AND TRADING PARTNERS KEEP COMING.

"BUY THIS, BUY THAT, PAY WHAT YOU SAID YOU'D PAY..." THE COMPANY WILL BE IN A MESS.

THE MONEY WILL BE GONE FROM THEIR COFFERS, AND THE MONEY CHANGERS WILL CATCH WIND OF THIS AND HIKE UP THEIR EXCHANGE RATES.

...THEY'LL TURN SUSPICIOUS. BUT IT WILL ALREADY BE TOO LATE.

AS THEY START GETTING LOW ON COIN...

...INCLUDING ONES FROM THEIR REGULAR CUSTOMERS. WHICH ARE MALICIOUS? WHICH FROM PARTIES THEY CAN'T AFFORD TO ANGER?

AND WHAT WILL THE COMPANY DO NEXT? THE MONEY ORDERS WILL KEEP COMING IN...

"BUT THERE'S A CONDITION."

"YOU SEEM TO BE IN TROUBLE, SO I'LL TAKE THESE MONEY ORDERS OFF YOUR HANDS.

THAT'S WHERE MR. LE ROI SAYS...

EXACTLY.

AND THERE HE SAYS, "BY THE WAY, I HEARD YOU HAVE A CERTAIN VOLUME IN YOUR POSSESSION"?

ASSUMING IT'S NOT EXPOSED, IS THERE A BENEFIT TO US FOR ALL THIS TROUBLE?

OF COURSE THERE IS.

AFTER ALL, COIN IS AWFULLY VALUABLE IN LENOS RIGHT NOW.

COMPANY WITH THE BOOK

BUY GOODS FROM "THAT" COMPANY USING 100 SILVER PIECES

PAY COIN TO COMPANIES IN LENOS WITH CLAIMS ON THAT COMPANY, HAVE THEM WRITE MONEY ORDERS...

...AND SEND THEM TO THAT COMPANY, EXCHANGE FOR SILVER, AND PROFIT FROM THE PRICE DIFFERENCE.

COMPANIES IN LENOS (MULTIPLE)

WHEN SELLING TO THAT COMPANY, USE 80 SILVER PIECES TO WRITE MONEY ORDERS FOR 100
(BECAUSE VALUE OF COIN HIGHER THAN MONEY ORDER FACE VALUE)

OH HOH.

AND FORTUNATELY FOR US, THE VALUE OF COIN IN LENOS IS CLEARLY MUCH STRONGER. SHALL I SHOW YOU THE FIGURES?

THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY. I'VE LARGELY ADDED IT UP ALREADY.

NITA (SMIRK)

...YOU'RE QUITE SOMETHING.

ZUI (SLIDE)

I'M IMPRESSED.

YOU THOUGHT NOT ONLY OF MAKING A CUT OFF THE FINANCING...

...BUT AT THE SAME TIME, HOW MR. LE ROI CAN BUY THAT BOOK.

IT'S THANKS TO THE TERRIBLE TIME I HAD PROCURING TRAVEL SUPPLIES AT THE MARKET.

GATA (RATTLE)

SHALL WE FORM A CONTRACT EMBODYING THIS IDEA?

MR. KIEMAN, I FULLY CONCUR WITH MR. LAWRENCE'S THOUGHTS.

THE PEOPLE IN THIS TOWN HAVE BEEN HOARDING SUPPLIES DUE TO THE HIGH VALUE OF COIN, YOU SEE.

LET'S TAKE THIS PATH, THEN.

I ACTUALLY CONSIDERED SOMETHING VERY SIMILAR.

I'M GLAD YOU'RE THE ONE WHO PROPOSED THIS, MR. LAWRENCE.

HUH?

AM I WRONG?

BUT YOU'VE ACCUMULATED A BIT TOO MUCH AGE AND EXPERIENCE TO CONSIDER SUCH CRUDE, RECKLESS THINGS.

HOWEVER, NO REASONABLE MIND WOULD COME UP WITH SUCH A PERFECT WAY TO HARASS...

...AND EVEN IF ONE DID, THEY WOULD HARDLY PROPOSE IT TO US, I CONCLUDED.

...PERHAPS SO.

...IS THIS THANKS TO SOMEONE WITH GREAT TENACITY YOU SAW BACK IN KERUBE?

I WONDER ...

UM...

...IS IT REALLY...ALL RIGHT TO GIVE ME SOMETHING LIKE THIS?

SURE.

IT'S AN OVERDUE REWARD FOR UNCOVERING REYNOLDS'S COPPER COIN FRAUD.

SPICE & WOLF

AND IT'S BETTER TO GIVE YOU LONG-LASTING THINGS TO WEAR THAN A FEW COINS.

MM

AYE. THESE ARE GOOD.

KLIN (SNIFF)

BUT IF WE OVERDO IT, YOU'LL BE A TARGET FOR SCOUNDRELS, SO WE'LL BE MODERATE.

THE MANTLE'S JUST FINE AS IT IS!

RIGHT!

REALLY EASY TO WALK IN

ZA (SHAKE)

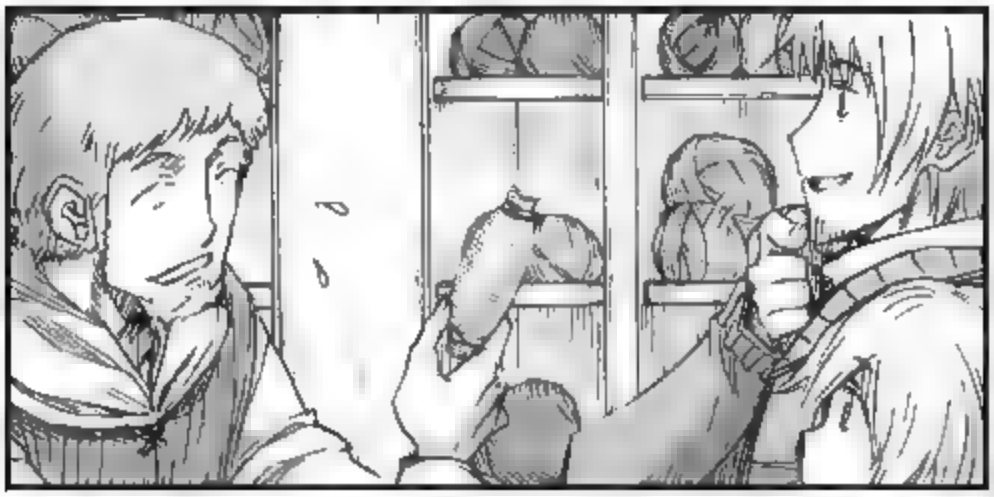
ZA

WOW!

THE LEATHER IS SOFT AND THICK. I GUARANTEE IT.

WANT TO TRY THEM ON?

SURE!



ZZZZ
ZZZZ
SO HOT

ZZZZ

NGH..

...

i

SO WHAT ABOUT THE FATHER RECOMMENDED IN THAT LETTER?

...HE SEEMS TO HAVE MOVED TO A DIFFERENT PARISH...

UNFORTU-NATELY...

I LOOKED INTO HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT, BUT IT TOOK SOME TIME.

IT SEEMS AFTEREFFECTS FROM THAT UPRISING ARE CAUSING INTERNAL DISORDER IN THE CHURCH.

I'M GLAD...

FORTUNATELY, HIS CHURCH SEEMS TO BE IN KIESCHEN, A CITY NOT FAR OFF.

IT WAS AT A COMPANY IN KIESCHEN, A MIDSIZED TOWN SOMEWHAT EAST OF LENOS.

AFTER A PAINFUL DISCUSSION, THE CONTRACT WITH MR. LE ROI WAS FORMALLY CONCLUDED...

...AND I WAS ABLE TO LEARN THE CONCRETE WHEREABOUTS OF THE FORBIDDEN BOOK.

...MR. LE ROI WOULD NEVER HAVE FORSAKEN US, EVEN SO.

HAD THE CHURCH BEEN IN MOUNTAINS IN THE OTHER DIRECTION...

ZZZ...

ZZZ...

PACHI (CRACKLE)

PACHI

HE'S OFTEN MISTAKEN AS A FRIVOLOUS MAN BECAUSE HE PLAYS THE FOOL BUT...

I'M WELL AWARE OF THAT.

NIKA (GRIN)

MORE THAN A FEW MERCHANTS BEHAVE LIKE THAT TO MAKE THEIR OPPONENTS LOWER THEIR GUARD.

ANYWAY... I'M VERY GLAD.

HEE!

HEE!

TRUE.

GATA (RATTLE)

THANK YOU FOR TAKING COL WITH YOU.

GU (SQUEEZE)

I INTEND TO HELP MR. COL SO LONG AS HE MIGHT BECOME A PROPER CHURCH LAW STUDENT.

NOT AT ALL... I HAVE A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY HERE, AFTER ALL.

HA HA HA!

AND I DID "PUT YOU UP TO THIS."

FAREWELLS ARE TOO BRIEF.

NO MATTER HOW ANGUISHED THE MOMENT, THE ACT KNOWN AS "BIDDING FAREWELL" IS OVER IN BUT AN INSTANT.

LIKE DRAWING THE ARROW OF A BOW, THERE WAS GREATER PERIL IN DRAWING IT OUT BIT BY BIT OUT OF FEAR.

THEY'RE NEW BOOTS, SO TAKE IT EASY ON THEM AT FIRST.

RIGHT

IF THE DEAL GOES WELL, I'LL INFORM THE ROWEN TRADE GUILD IMMEDIATELY.

I ANAIT FORTUITOUS NEWS.

HOLD YOUR BREATH AND JUST PULL.

GOOD-BYE, MR. LAWRENCE!

YOU KNOW HOW IT'S GOING TO END ANYWAY...

MISS HOLO...!

BA CTURND

MR. LAW-RENCE!

GOOD-BYE...!!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

LET'S...! SEE EACH OTHER... AGAIN...!!

I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN IT, BUT... THE TRAVELING MERCHANT'S ALWAYS THE ONE SEEN OFF.

HOLO...

WELL, NOW WE'RE RID OF ALL OUR NUISANCES, EH?

NN...

IT'S AN IRONCLAD RULE AMONG OUR KIND: TRAVEL AS LIGHT AS POSSIBLE.

HMPH.

THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO ASK.

HM?

COME, YOU.

NOW YOU ASK?

AH?

MM. WHY IS IT...THAT YOU'RE SO SET ON GOING TO YOITSU WITH ME?

YOU'RE NO FOOL, TRULY. YOU'VE BRAINS ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND REASON. SO WHY WAS MY NOTION TO GO ALONE SO HATEFUL TO YOU?

JEALOUSY OF MYURI, AYE, I COULD BELIEVE THAT ONCE YOU'D HEARD OF HIM, BUT THAT WAS A LATER ADDITION, WAS IT NOT?

NO...

COME NOW...

DO NOT MAKE SUCH A FACE. 'TIS STRANGE TO ME.

IS IT SO STRANGE?

MMMMM...

YOU STILL WANTED TO GO WITH ME, EVEN BEFORE YOU'D HEARD ABOUT THE MERCENARIES.

AND AS FOR WHY, I SIMPLY CANNOT...

'TIS NOT TRADE THAT COMES "AFTER"?

AT THIS LATE HOUR?

OR IS IT SOMETHING ELSE? IF YOU DO NOT TELL ME EVERYTH—

PERHAPS, BUT... YOU SAID OUR CONTRACT'S DONE WHEN I GUIDE YOU TO YOITSU...

I DON'T MUCH WANT TO SAY THIS, BUT I TRUST YOU'LL FORGIVE ME IF IT HURTS TO HEAR...

...BUT I THOUGHT YOU THE HEARTLESS SORT WHO'D PART WITH A SIMPLE GOOD-BYE?

AH!

COME NOW, SURELY YOU DID NOT...

ER...

...NO, I...

ドクン
DOKUN
I'VE NEVER HEARD...
...THE CRUCIAL WORDS FROM HOLO, EVEN ONCE...!?
ドクン
DOKUN
ドク
DOKUN (THUMP)
COULD SOME-THING SO ABSURD BE TRUE?
HEH HEH...
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS, EH?
NIYA (LEER)
KLINE (WIGGLE)
KLINE
AYE, WELL.
I SUPPOSE I MUST ADMIT I'VE DONE LIKEWISE.
NIYA
NIYA
TAJI (WAVER)

HOH, HOH, YOU TRULY ARE A FOOL.

HEH HEH!

BUT FOOL THAT YOU ARE... I LOVE YOU.

To be continued in Volume 13...

Special Thanks!?

MR. OKAMOTO ITTOUHEI,
MR. TENTSU-TOI, MR. YAKKUN,
MR. N-TA, MR. ORIGUCHI

Afterword

HI, KEITO KOUME HERE, IN CHARGE OF THE ART FOR THE MANGA VERSION OF SPICE AND WOLF. WE FINALLY REACHED SCENES WITH MISS ELSA I'D ALWAYS WANTED TO DRAW, AND LAWRENCE AND HOLO PART WAYS WITH COL, WHO'S BEEN WITH THEM SINCE VOLUME 8. THANKS TO ALL THE READERS WHO'VE STUCK WITH US THIS LONG. ALSO, THANKS FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART TO EDITOR MR. A, WHO JOINED US AROUND THE SAME TIME COL DID.

FROM THE NEXT VOLUME ON, IT'S A RUSH TO THE FINAL CHAPTER. NOW THAT HOLO AND LAWRENCE HAVE CONFIRMED THEIR FEELINGS, I HOPE YOU WILL ENJOY WHERE THEIR TRAVELS TAKE THEM FROM HERE!

SPICE & WOLF 12

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